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# World Wide Work of the North American Young Men's Christian Associations

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**A survey presented at the North American Employed Officers' Conference of the Y. M. C. A. on the evening of June 28, 1921 at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.**

If I were asked to characterize the past significant year in the life of our Young Men's Christian Association Movement, I would say that it has been a year of re-examination of conditions and tendencies. When have we had a year of so many searching and constructive conferences? When have we had so many representative commissions and committees studying worthwhile questions? Likewise, it has been a year of readjustment to changed conditions. Oh, how changed! Old things have literally passed away. We have had a year of reassertion of guiding principles. Thank God, we have guiding principles that never led us astray! We have had a year of reviving of convictions and of reviving of spirit. The faces of men here tonight look so different to me from what they did a year ago. The physical reaction and nervous tension have been relieved. We have had a year also of revealing of unrealized possibilities near and far.

While not a few Associations are still laboring under serious handicaps occasioned by the interruptions and delays of the war period and the general reaction and exhaustion in the wake of the war, the large majority of them have worked their way back to the normal and many are moving on with greater strides than ever and with more marked achievements than during the fruitful period before the war. If we may judge the success of an organization not so much by the volume of work accomplished as by the number, extent and gravity of the difficulties surmounted in achieving the results, then the past year has been truly notable in point of success. Think of the difficulties with which we have had to grapple at close hand,—difficulties economic and financial, difficulties due to the physical condition of men, difficulties due to the prevailing psychology of the North American nations and of the world, difficulties, we must admit in honesty, moral and spiritual. The year has presented a battle field. This has not been without its advantages. Our leaders have shown their real leadership in recognizing the difficulties as added opportunities for growth in faith and character and for large, constructive achievement. Any organization which can carry through in so short a time such a stupendous undertaking as the war work of the Associations, notwithstanding all its shortcomings and limitations, without dissolving the regular work, and that can within two or three years in the midst of the difficult process of demobilization and reaction bring its work back to a higher degree of efficiency than ever, affords convincing proof of its vitality and of the reliability of its principles and of the strength of its leadership.

Speaking at the outset of the Canadian Associations, let me state that the Canadian National Council have reduced their staff in order to bring it down to meet the possibilities of a most difficult financial situation. This has helped re-establish a new basis of more solid relationship between the local Associations of Canada and their national organization. There has been a loosening of the ties between the old student work and the boys' work of the Dominion on the one hand and their general Association Movement on the other hand. It is hoped and believed that processes of continued negotiation will insure a re-solidarity and larger cooperation than ever. One sees up and down Canada evidences of the rising and moving of a new life. One notices it in the growth of democracy in their Movement, in the enlarged membership, in the renewed appreciations shown by the Canadian people of the Association and of its constructive program.

Turning next to our own State Work, I would say that with the exception of possibly seven or eight state organizations, the forty or more State Committees have during the recent difficult year, not only held their own but improved their service. State work is far more widely and favorably known across this country than ever. More and more men entertain that larger and truer conception of state work, viewing it not so much

as an agency of supervision of existing work, as an agency of extension and of state-wide service. It is highly reassuring to observe how general has become the practice of State Committees to evolve, revise and prosecute a real state-wide policy. The marked growth and loyalty of the financial constituencies of most State Committees has been striking. We do not overlook the fact here and there has been a state organization which in its plans has over-reached and has thus over-strained its financial constituency; nor the fact that, just as certain phases of international work and of certain local Associations are open to the charge of being led by men who are inadequate to their tasks, so in a few states the leadership is not sufficiently strong.

Passing on to the Home Work of the International Committee, I would indicate that a controlling factor in shaping the policy of the International Committee in the recent past has been the mandates of the Detroit Convention. There has been no Convention in years which gave so many clear and significant mandates. A sincere effort is being made to give them effect. The regional plan is now taking shape. During the year regional conferences have been held in all of the five regions. The Regional Committees, composed, as you know, of the members of the International Committee in the respective regions and the Chairmen of the State Committees, ex-officio, in those regions, have been constituted, and in all but one case have begun to function. The purposes of this regional work are, I trust, clearly understood. The plan involves a closer coordination of the varied work of the International Committee as it touches a given region, a much closer coordination of the approaches of the International Committee to that region, an effort to bring vividly before the New York Headquarters the desires and requirements of the region, an effort also to make much better known to a given region what the International Committee at Headquarters, and in its wide-spread work throughout the tinent, is able to supply. In a word, it is the ginning of what I honestly hope is going to ve to be a much further decentralization of a rk that has been all too much concentrated. I glad to notice a growing interest in the evolu- and the application of the plan. The results ould be a much better service to local Associations, for that is the end in view in all of these policies, and likewise, to this end, it should result in a strengthening of the hands of State Committees.

The Shuey Commission appointed at the Detroit Convention, or as a result of its action, has begun the study of the simplification of the internal working of the International Committee organization. It is believed by some that the International organization has in some respects been top-heavy. It has not been without its advantage that this year the staff has been considerably reduced. I might call attention to another action taken at Detroit in calling for a Budget Reviewing Committee. This committee has rendered valuable service each of the two succeeding years. We have had also the valuable cooperation of a similar committee of City Association General Secretaries who with downright frankness, sympathy and thoroughness have sought to understand the situation and point the way to desired improvements.

We see the result of the work of these two committees not only in reducing the Home Work Budget at a time when it was exceedingly difficult to make a reduction, but also in the improvement of the methods for ensuring desired support.

The Commission on the Colored Work has helped to turn a difficult corner. It had thrust upon it by Detroit one of the gravest situations in the Association world, but with commendable Christlikeness the colored men and white men of the South and North blended their spirit, their thought, their purpose with results that I am persuaded carry in them great improvement in race relationships and also in the work for colored men.

The Army and Navy Commission had one of the most taxing problems placed in its hands but it has handled it in a way that should be commended by the whole Brotherhood. They rose to their task and outlined a policy that marks a distinct advance on the past and I believe will prove to be entirely workable.

The Commission on Convention Representation and Rules seems to have stirred up a hornets' nest. There is not time to discuss the implications of this report but I trust those who represent Associations in small cities, the county Associations, the Railroad Associations and Student Associations, not to mention others, will make themselves heard at some later session of this Conference and in the coming numbers of *Association Men.*

The Commission on Approach to the Churches has one of the most important and let us frankly admit, one of the most difficult tasks ever put in the hands of the leaders of the Churches, because they are to go a stage further than the Mackenzie Commission which reported at Detroit. They are to do nothing less than to take up with one denomination after another, through its properly constituted authorities and officials, any maladjustments, any friction points, any unsatisfactory working that they may have been observed or experienced by that particular denomination in its contact with our work and to point the way constructively to improvements. This is an ideal commission and ought to have the backing of every man in the Brotherhood.

I will omit reading the summary of achievements and unsolved problems of the eighteen departments, counselling groups and bureaus of the Home Work of the International Committee; suf-

fice it to say that in almost every case they have registered one of their best years of service and solid achievement.

The Annual Dinner of the International Committee has been resumed, having been discontinued a year or two before America entered the war. This year's dinner is better known as the Pershing Dinner. I do not know of any event in our Brotherhood in many a long day that enabled one so to feel the pulse beat of the Movement as did that occasion where a thousand men—chiefly laymen but also including leading secretaries, local, state and international—came together; nor do I recall any occasion where more reassuring notes were struck, notably by our great Commander-in-Chief who has put us right in the eyes of our generation and across the breadth of the world.

I come now to facts of encouragement in the American Associations, and I trust that what I shall emphasize applies in large measure to the Canadian Associations.

First, there has been a healthy reaction and recovery from the war criticism. While the fires still burn intensely in some places, especially in rural communities, generally speaking, the victory has been won. I say the victory advisedly, because we had arrayed against us something more than our own weaknesses which we were frank to confess and deal with. Insofar as the criticisms were justified, they have been taken to heart in an honest, Christian way and the Associations have profited thereby, as do all who are purified by fire. Insofar as they were unfounded, they have been exposed. Men's sins find them out. The Association has been more than vindicated. The Association, as a result of its dignified attitude under fire—and that is the time you test a man or an organization—and the cumulative evidence, has more friends today than ever before in its history. That I have no doubt about, and I am in a position, possibly, to know. This is true all over North America. And what shall I not say about foreign lands? Is it not highly significant that the American Young Men's Christian Association is the only organization to which the allied nations and most of the enemy countries have applied and appealed, in the light of what they saw in the war, to extend to them its helpful ministry?

A second encouragement is the marked growth in the membership. Before the war the membership of the North American Associations numbered approximately six hundred thousand; now is probably not far short of a million. I tried to get George Hodge to become a prophet but he refuses to prophesy. The Association has mastered the problem of making contacts with young men. You notice in the Physical Department there has been within five or six years an increase of over fifty per cent. in the number of men served. There has been an even more wonderful expansion in the educational work especially in the last two years. I wish you could have heard the findings as I did last night at the meeting of the Educational Council at Chicago College. I said then that whether we have in mind the democratic control of the Council, or the number of Associations touched and guided by the Council, or the number of young men as students lastingly benefited by its activities, or the great increase in the volume of instruction, or the improvement in the quality of that instruction and guidance, or the number and character of men related to this task as educators and educational directors, or the original contributions made by authors and by the Committees on text books and brochures, or the words of approval that have been spoken by discerning people throughout the country, the work of this Council and of the United Y. M. C. A. Schools marks one of the really great recent steps of progress.

Our Association membership is, as a rule, as large as the present buildings can accommodate and greater than our present program and staff can properly assimilate. It was not so thirty years ago. This is the more remarkable because it has been achieved in the face of the reaction and the opposition of the recent years, and it has been accomplished without compromising our principles.

A third reassuring fact is the really encouraging financial position of the Movement. While the past year has not registered as marked an increase in our material resources as have some preceding years, and this owing to prevailing unprecedented difficult economic conditions at home and throughout the world, nevertheless it has been a good year financially. I say this having borne the burden with a good many of you. A few new buildings have been secured. I do not know of any organization that has had a better building record. Of forty-seven buildings designed by the Building Bureau, twenty-two are held up pending the clearing of the financial atmosphere. A large amount of Association indebtedness has been raised.

Current expense canvasses have been better than in the preceding year. The Brotherhood is to be congratulated on the good showing their cooperation achieved for the Home and Foreign Work of the International Committee and of most of the State Committees. The time of the staff of the Financial Service Bureau has been claimed to the limit. No railroad corporation to my knowledge has during the year reduced by one dollar its appropriations to the Railroad Association work. The same could be said of many of our leading industrial corporations. While many large givers to our Associations and to our general agencies have, owing to high taxes and other causes, been obliged to reduce their customary contributions, this has been more than offset by the vast increase in the number of new donors.

Contrast our record—I say this not boastfully—with that of other welfare and altruistic organizations. Contrast our record with that of the Association Brotherhood of other nations and we have reason humbly and sincerely to thank God and to nerve ourselves for what may prove to be an even more difficult year financially.

We cannot report a great increase in endowment funds but some of the best thinking has been done on this subject and also some of the best writing, for instance, the splendid article by John W. Cook in the Association Forum.

The fourth encouragement is the enormous widening of opportunity. I sum this up by saying with care that at home ten doors are open to the Young Men's Christian Association where there was one before the war. If any man is disposed to question that, I hope he will cross-question me.

A fifth encouragement is the growing community-wide emphasis. The Association is coming to see that it has a responsibility to every group of men and boys within the range of its influence, quite apart from membership and building considerations. It wishes to make sure that every man and boy has a fair chance for all-round development. Minneapolis, with its service at over three hundred points outside of its central building and branches, is one of the best classic examples. Associations are manifesting increasing ability to serve without equipment. This does not mean the abandoning of equipment but a better understanding of its use. Moreover, the wider or more extensive the community outreach of the Association, the more important it is that the central propagating base and dynamo be maintained in highest efficiency.

A sixth encouragement is that the Association is more and more recognizing Christ as Lord, and, therefore, claiming for Him all the life and relationships of young men and boys. Our leaders are facing up as never before—and I cannot tell you how much this has refreshed my spirit—to the implications of our wondrous Gospel. This is at once the significance and the inspiration of the triangle idea. Some of us have been defending it in Europe in the last few weeks. It is based on the idea of the Incarnation. What is the triangle idea?—It means Christ taking possession of a man as a unit. To Christ man cannot be broken into compartments. Christ is Lord of all or not Lord at all. And there is something specious and superficial in the attempt to speak of any part of our work, properly conducted, as more religious than another part.

This explains why the organization holds the most unique place of any Christion organization in the world in its relation to all social, national and racial groups. Take the social groups, in the industrial area especially. Name the organization that commands so fully the confidence of employers and employees and that, therefore, holds such a key position with reference to bringing about common understanding and action. Or apply this principle to international relations and likewise to the more baffling inter-racial relations. What a colossal responsibility to be the medium in His hand to mold, to guide, to unify such varied, divergent and at times—especially in these times—conflicting forces; may we walk humbly before our God.

A seventh encouragement is the deepened and unshakable conviction, yours and mine, as to the fundamental or central place of the so-called religious work of the Associations. This in spite of the fact that in many parts of the Movement this most vital phase of the work is in such an unsatisfactory condition and in some Associations is neglected and almost eliminated.

I have held conferences recently, with the leaders of our Brotherhood from thirty-six states. I have visited in the last eight months twenty-six states. It has given me quite a wide contact with the Brotherhood in its present state. With your help and that of other leading secretaries and laymen, I have recently had an enormous correspondence, my correspondents giving me the benefit of their frank and honest impressions of our present state and tendencies. With all of this in mind and, also having had the benefit of those searching processes, furthered by the Religious Work Department of the International Committee, I wish to go on record as saying that the spiritual heart of the Brotherhood was never more sound than it is at present. I noticed in these visits and in what was said in my hearing in these many conferences, and in what has been laid before me by you and others in correspondence such reassuring facts, tendencies and attitudes as the following: Our leaders are burdened about our religious state. They are dissatisfied to the degree of pain with spiritual conditions. There are multiplied evidences of conviction of sin among us. There is recognition of the personal spiritual poverty and lack of fruitfulness of our Associations. The messengers to whom our members respond most deeply are the spiritual messengers. The books of the Association Press and other presses with the largest circulation are the most spiritual books and books which are most exacting in the application of the principles of Christ. In other words, men are turning to Christ and to none other. All this is a precursor of something infinitely better than we have ever known. Thank God for the humbling path.

An eighth encouragement: Real progress is being made toward arriving at a better understanding with the Churches. It was startling to discover that we had, both locally and nationally, drifted apart or fallen out of gear. This was due to negative and positive causes which we need not take time to outline. The situation as we now see it had become very serious. The work of the Mackenzie Commission and its report at Detroit

was taken seriously by the Brotherhood. The best thing done in connection with the report was the adoption of its recommendation for a continuing Commission on Approach to the Churches. This will help greatly to re-define and effect right relationships. On every hand there are multiplied, fresh contacts and a larger understanding, sympathy and co-operation with the Churches.

A ninth encouragement is the evident, sincere desire to improve the organization, the working efficiency and the service of our general agencies, both on the part of the Associations whose creatures and servants these agencies are and on the part of the agencies themselves. The frank criticism, especially when it has been constructive and brotherly or Christlike, in the sense that it has been made direct to the person or agency concerned and in the sense that it has been made according to the principle of the Golden Rule, has been most profitable. The growth in humility and teachableness on the part of those who were the objects of criticism and of those who honestly sought to improve conditions or practice has been simply splendid. These and other signs of unselfish discontent—notice I use the word "unselfish" there is another kind that is selfish and devilish,—and of like unselfish desire to help one another in the interest of the Brotherhood and of the Kingdom, I most emphatically place among the sources of encouragement.

Let me turn now to conditions and tendencies in the American Associations which should cause us real concern and which should call forth our best united, constructive endeavor. And first of all, let it be frankly admitted that the Association is failing to impress the character and influence the action of our members to any such extent as is desirable and as might reasonably be expected. Our buildings, as has been already stated, are thronged with young men as never before. For what are they there? We are not assimilating this greatly increased membership. We admit it. Let us ask ourselves searching questions:

Are we firing these members with common ideals and passion? I mean the passion that burns within our own breasts.

Are we developing in them a sense of brotherhood?

To what extent are we begetting in them the spirit of giving rather than that of getting?

To what extent are we making them a united, aggressive force in our communities and in the world?

What contribution are we making through them toward the solution of the grave post-war problems?

Are we generating the spirit of the Crusaders?

I have spent a good many hours on those questions and I mean to spend many more.

If we aspire to have such results—and this was the mainspring of our call to the Association service, and with you I want to leave the service if such ceases to be true—we must concern ourselves much more with how it is to be done. We must give more attention to improving our workmanship.

I come to the second ground of concern. The Association leaders and workers are dominated too much by the material, financial and institutional aspects of our work. The care of the building and equipment interests and the claims of the business administration make a disproportionate claim on our attention and time. Some men tell me that from sixty to eighty per cent. of their time is devoted to this material side, leaving only a small fraction to be given to the real objective—character building. Thus the second generation of secretaries are largely absorbed with administrative responsibilities in contrast with the first generation who concerned themselves primarily with being personal religious leaders of men. Today the talent, the energy, the strategy, the very genius of too many men have been bent on acquiring property and perfecting the organization to maintain it. I am speaking not only of local leaders but also of those related to the general agencies. It has been a period noted for material efficiency rather than for spiritual conquest. We should not shrink from the large plants, from the handling of vast sums of money or from developing a great institution, provided this represents actual increase in vital contacts and in spiritual processes within ourselves and within the organization.

The third ground of solicitude is the great need of scaling up the business efficiency of our organization. Notwithstanding all that I have just said about our being dominated unduly by material claims and by the requirements of running big institutions, yet because of this very danger, we need so to perfect our business administration that we as leaders may be liberated increasingly for the more vital tasks. It is an idle dream to assume that any man among us can get along without bearing financial and administrative responsibility. Robert McBurney could not do so; David Sinclair could not escape; nor could Edwin See. Dwight L. Moody, the greatest evangelist of our country, never escaped financial responsibility. I have seen him sign his name to financial letters for three or four hours at a stretch; he had to give weeks each year to lifting difficult financial loads. The most spiritual bishops and other church leaders cannot escape this kind of responsibility. But we can so master our conditions that means shall not take the place of ends, or become ends in themselves; and one of the main secrets of this is not giving more but better attention to this indispensable part of our trust.

Few Associations have men competent to handle their business problems. We offer too small

salaries and inadequate opportunity for promotion to get the kind of men we need. The Associations seldom employ experts in the sense that big business concerns do. We are not as scientific, particular and exacting as are men of successful business affairs. I am not without encouragement as I think of the modest and thorough-going work that Mr. Johnston has been doing in all parts of the country, and of the Manual of Business Practice of the Chicago Association brought out by Mr. Parker, and of the provision made at the present conference for the creation of a Business Secretaries' Association to help standardize and to lift standards and to establish a clearing house on these lines. The root of our trouble is the prevalent superficial view of the business part of our work as a necessary evil. Rather, it should be regarded as one of the boundless opportunities for pure religion. There is a lot of hypocrisy in this realm. Let it be reiterated that to Christ nothing is common or unclean. And to Him nothing is too hard. It is easily possible for Him to dominate any building, to raise any proper budget and to administer any supervisory committee, and if we are in intimate touch with Christ this is going to be one of the most spiritual parts of our work.

A fourth ground of concern: The lack of democracy in the Association Movement is one of the most disappointing aspects of its present day life. There are not many signs of improvement but there are some. For example, the Student Department, (I commend the study of what they have done since the Detroit Convention, or go back to the Cleveland Convention) ; certain phases of the boys' work; and likewise the educational work. As a rule no considerable body of the members control or interest themselves in the control of the Association or in the determination of its policies. Therefore, they do not regard it and claim it as their own. If Mr. McBurney sounded the warning in his day, imagine his voice were he speaking today. The Association is becoming less and less an organization of its members and more and more one of its officers. This lack of democracy is apparent when we turn to the general agencies.

This leads me a little deeper into another weakness—the fifth ground of concern: The Association is weak in corporate action on a national scale. It is most difficult to secure concerted nation-wide action on any subject. Therefore, we have not gone forward as might reasonably have been expected even in the face of war criticism, organized opposition and post-war reaction. I am persuaded that the Brotherhood desire to act as a unit. I refuse to believe anything else. We desire to act as a unit without sacrificing anything of local autonomy or without placing undue authority in the hands of any general agency.

The cause of this weakness in national corporate action is found in the fact that we are too divided among ourselves. The division is based partly on different conceptions of Association policy, one group emphasizing, possibly unduly, local antonomy, another the need for increased efficiency in corporate action. This lack of united action is due at times, it would seem, to an element of mistrust and a misinterpretation of motives among the leaders themselves. In consequence the highest and noblest plans may be prejudiced or distrusted. When loyalty gives way to suspicion or antagonism, it is indeed serious. It is possible, of course, to over-estimate the seriousness of this division, but it should not be ignored. Insofar as the want of unity may be due to suspicion, mistrust or jealousy, it calls for heart-searching, repentance and prostration before God.

The representatives of the International and State Committees must, as servants of the local Associations, commend themselves to the leaders of the local Associations, both secretarial and lay, by absolute frankness and by baring to these local leaders all the plans, policies and processes of these agencies of service. They must ever seek to give the impression (and this because based on reality, for what you are speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say) that they are striving to represent and serve the Associations and not in any sense to dominate them or work apart from their wishes. They must by continued self-sacrificing service gain and hold the confidence of the local leaders.

The local leaders in turn must, in all their relations with the representatives of the general agencies, manifest whole-hearted loyalty and take the initiative in bringing directly (not indirectly), promptly, and constructively to the attention of these representatives, any criticisms and suggestions in their judgment calculated to promote the most helpful service and to preserve the most brotherly and Christlike fellowship.

I want here and now to do what I reached the State Secretaries Conference too late to do, to say that the International Committee wishes to have join them throughout their annual policy shaping meeting to be held next September, a group of five State Secretaries to be chosen from the five regions by the State Secretaries' Association. We also want there a group of five General Secretaries representing the work in large cities, in small cities, in Railroad Associations, in Student Associations and in other groups. The presence and collaboration of these two groups will be of the greatest possible value in helping us to see how we can best serve the Associations.

Insofar as the lack of close and triumphant unity is due to faulty organization or procedure, it calls for courageous, wise overhauling of machinery and revision of our practice. It must be admitted that we are not organized for the most helpful expression of opposition, and, therefore, are weak in authoritative corporate action with reference to any policy of a general agency. There

is no adequate provision for bringing quickly and effectively the will of the majority of the local Associations, large and small Associations, different classes of Associations, different kinds of members, lay and secretarial, to bear on the State and the International Committees. Therefore, dissatisfaction of local Associations may take the form of non-cooperation or of an attempt to express itself in some other way for which no channel is provided.

This is not simply a negative matter. Nobody is interested in negatives as much as in the positive. It is entirely laudable that the local forces have a formative influence in shaping policies in every state and in the national and international affairs. I do not care what changes are made, I want to see the New York Headquarters—and I know I speak for every State Secretary with reference to his headquarters—fully and promptly responsive to the best sentiment of the Brotherhood. Nothing could be more intolerable than not to know whether we are doing what the Associations desire, and not to have the Associations feel with proper pride that these agencies are their own.

The sixth ground of concern is the clamant need of more first-rate men in the secretaryship. We must admit that the average standard is much too low. The growing magnitude and complexity of the Association, and the multiplied grave problems which press upon the leadership of the Association, demand stronger personalities, men better furnished and better trained, men with a fixed purpose to devote their lives to the work. We must lay stronger hold on the ablest, all-round college men and we must be more thorough-going in trying them out. The recruiting must be more on a selective basis. The call of Almighty God to enter the work should become the great factor and without it men should hold back from entering this work.

More of the leading Associations should have an efficient personnel policy like that of the New York City Association. The Retirement Fund must be gotten into operation at the earliest practicable date. The failure of leaders to invest their own time, thought and intercession in finding and coaching candidates and in making personal friendships with promising young men is one of our gravest failures. The General Secretary and senior members of his staff must find their chief glory in working and living through their younger men. The mistaken economy of Boards of Directors in paying inadequate salaries to the younger men and to men who do not bring monetary value to the Association must be corrected.

We must back to the limit our training agencies. The three Association Colleges were never more worthy of our generous support. Our Continuation or Summer Schools were never so well administered, never so fruitful. The Training Center idea never meant so much to the people who really discern. The Personnel Bureau of the International Committee continues its most effective and constructive work. The Conference on the Association Profession is a great factor not only in unifying and intensifying all this work but also in raising standards.

The seventh cause of concern is that the prophetic and heroic notes are too largely missing among our Association leaders. If we are to arrest the attention, command the confidence and call out the devotion of the most inquiring generation of young men and boys that the world has ever known, likewise the most forward-looking generation, the generation most dissatisfied with the past and most prepared to endure hardness to bring in a new era, we ourselves must be men of vision, of courage and of reality, and, I might add, of sympathy. While we want to conserve at all costs that which is good and true in our past, we likewise want to usher in a better day.

While seeking to safeguard valued tradition—and nobody values it more highly than I do; I spent nine hours a week for four years studying history, not in vain but to come to appreciate the value of tradition—we need to be doubly on our guard lest we imperil an even greater possible future. In our convention deliverances, conference findings, summer school institutes, platform speeches and printed statements, we need to be concerned with vastly more than preserving the status quo; for, as the Pilgrim Father said, "If you stop becoming better you will cease to be good." There was a time when some feared that in the realm of applied Christianity, we would go ahead of the Churches. Today there is danger lest we part company with the Churches to which we have sworn allegiance.

It is possible for men to become so conservative that they are in danger of stimulating radicalism. In an age of conflict between social groups, between races and between ideas, we need to do more than to work in the zone of agreement. We need by Christ's principles and by His power to widen the zone of agreement. Otherwise, why did Jesus Christ come among men? No zone of agreement is widened by drift, by chance or by evasion. On this vital point I am confident we are in accord.

The young men of the present generation are seeking light as to whether the Gospel of Christ is applicable to all life and to all relationships. We need to hold their confidence in order to help them through all of the coming days. Nothing is more encouraging, therefore, than the vital and growing interest of our leaders and members in the social, industrial, racial, international and apologetic questions. Why? In the first place, because Jesus Christ was and is interested in them. In the second place, because the Churches to which we belong are profoundly interested in them. In the third place, because, as we have seen, the most wide-awake and forward-looking

young men and boys are keenly interested in them. In the fourth place, because it opens the path of difficulty and heroism and this in turn means life from the dead. Finally, because the future is with those who are thus increasingly interested.

A last ground of concern and even alarm is that of the mental stagnation and spiritual starvation of so many of the leaders and workers. Absorption in administrative details crowds out serious reading, original investigation and deep thinking. This is most serious because lack of thinking means lack of clear conviction, lack of courage and lack of leadership. It is to be feared that many of us are becoming promoters rather than creators. One man startled me within two days by venturing the statement that he could check off the names of a thousand men in the secretaryship who had not brought forth an original treatise, large or small, on some vital aspect of our character-building work for men and boys.

It is to be feared that there has been a breakdown of the most rewarding habits of the daily, generous cultivation of the spiritual life. Of too many of us in our respective spheres, might it not be said with truth, first in station, last in soul. This is our most strategic peril. Conquer this day by day and every other one will dissolve. Because it is inconceivable that the living Christ be formed in us, be given right of way within us, that is, within our thought processes, within our ambitions, within our motive life, and He not break out within us individually, and, therefore, corporately in the Movement in triumphant power.

I call attention now to some of the regions beyond, right in front of our doors here in North America. To the surprise of some of us but not of discerning men who have mastered the facts, our great cities ought to be placed first in the list. As Mr. William J. Parker's able paper in the **Association Forum**—by the way, among the encouraging developments of the year should have been mentioned the **Association Forum**—shows, by far our most neglected field from the point of view of density of need and numbers neglected are the very city centers which we have prided ourselves too much were already occupied. Let this area of neglect, therefore, be held in prominence. Then hundreds of small cities and literally thousands of towns, you might say, have the door of hope so far as the Association opens it, closed to the young manhood and boyhood of this generation. And what shall I not say about the county field as a whole? It seems incredible that less than three hundred of three thousand counties are organized. I might be discouraged did my memory not carry me back, by the law of association, to my first conference of the Employed Officers in 1889 at Orange, New Jersey, where you, Uncle Robert (addressing Robert Weidensall) read your historic paper, and where men were more disposed to ridicule than to believe, still less follow, and to remember what has been filled in since in living content. Thank God you have lived to see it as, God grant, you may live to see many another almost unbelievable development. As I recall the report of the Commission on the Occupation of the Field as presented at Detroit, I am persuaded we have only opened the door to this unending vista out in our rural communities. We have not entered the field, still less mastered the method by which we should do it.

Among every class of young men to whom we have addressed ourselves, there are almost limitless regions beyond. The most overwhelming in magnitude, in urgency and in danger is that of the industrial field. There are certain special classes which should make a powerful appeal to us that we have almost lost from our vision. Think, for example, of the Mexican young men and boys. There is no better flank attack upon the needs and perils of the young men of Mexico than by way of reaching the more ambitious and enterprising Mexican youth on this side of the line. Over a half million of young men are behind prison bars—their average age is twenty-seven—and another half million are convicted each year, about a half million being released, and we have practically not thought of that as a field. Yet, we say we are in sympathy with Jesus Christ who came to seek and save that which was lost. Potentially, strategically and from every other point of view, the most important and neglected class still, notwithstanding all of the powerful emphasis and all of the fruitful service of the last two decades, are the nearly one million boys of the high schools and the more than four millions of working boys of these two great countries.

I come now to the Foreign Work of the North American Associations. That has become a wonderful work. The last conference, save one, that I attended, was in the Graduate School at Princeton where we had present last week 130 representatives of our Foreign Work, including men home on furlough or under appointment to go out soon to the foreign field, also their wives. My memory leaped back to the Philadelphia Convention thirty-two years ago when we saw first two foreign Secretaries sent out—McConaughy to India and Swift to Japan. I said, "This epitomizes the wonderful expansion of the staff of trusted leaders of the Brotherhood out into the great regions beyond." The work has grown until now the two hundred foreign secretaries are outnumbered by between three and four times as many indigenous secretaries. We might fittingly and safely place ourselves behind their lead in nearly every land to which we have gone, as we have already done in the principal fields. This work is a vital work. You are reminded of this by its youthfulness, by its indigenous character, by its bold initiative, by its willingness to break new paths, by its propagating power and self-sacrificial spirit. The National Committees have become real leaders in the world-wide alliance of Associations. They will

rank with the best general agencies we have on this or any other continent.

The Foreign Work Commission to report at this Conference, has never done better work than in the later stages of its constructive service of giving counsel on every aspect of the enterprise.

The visits during the year to the great battle fields by such laymen as Mr. William A. Rogers of Buffalo, and Mr. E. J. Couper of Minneapolis, and of Secretaries Brockman in the Far East, Eddy in the Near East, Hurrey in South America, and Clinton and Babcock in Mexico, have served to promote the solidarity and mutual helpfulness of the Foreign Work.

Then I think of those notable recent gatherings, the National Convention of China and the one of India that would class with any conferences held under the name of the Y. M. C. A. anywhere at any time. The Foreign Work has indeed become a world power. Its program of physical education and of health promotion touches all continents. Already it has the ambitious motto, "play-for-all," and this idea is being carried out more extensively in some of the difficult non-Christian fields than in the Christian nations at the home base. A chain of Association colleges is taking shape across the breadth of non Christian continents. An unwearying campaign of presenting the living Christ to living men and boys is being waged in all these fields with startlingly encouraging results. The foreign Associations insist that Christ does have a message to every side of life and in every relationship, otherwise they might well be depressed in every one of these fields. If Christ does not speak a word for all relationships of men, might they not better withdraw, they say? They are mobilizing a force for righteousness and unselfishness that in its kindling and aggressive power reminds one of the Crusaders. They are unifying the nations and the races in a way that is almost unbelievable.

A new day has come to the Foreign Work. Let us seek to characterize it. Nationally there has come across the world the thrill of a new life. New nations are being born and old nations are being re-born. It requires the John the Baptist spirit among our leaders to deal with all these nations with their new spirit of national independence and racial patriotism.

Internationally it is a time of suspicion, irritation and lack of fundamental unity. Never have we so much needed to put to the forefront men of international mind, of common mind.

Economically the world is bent low with impossible loads, and the men who go to the foreign fields, the great abodes of poverty and hardship, must be men of sympathetic minds.

Industrially it is a time of confusion, chaos and burning strife in almost every field to which we have gone. We must there, as here, have men of meditating mind.

Ethically it is a time of relaxing of moral standards, of dulling the sharp edge of vital ethical distinctions, and of weakening of traditions which bound preceding generations. At such a time we must have men of disciplined minds to shape policies and to lead campaigns.

Religiously, how many men have missed the way? Blind leaders of the blind on every hand. How necessary it is as we go to the homes of the non-Christian religions to have men with the mind of Christ who came not to destroy but to fulfill, to fill with living content everything that is true, and to burn with unquenchable fire that which is wrong.

Among the Christian forces it is a time of a recrudescence of denominationalism on the one hand and of a growing desire for inter-denominational cooperation on the other hand. We need men of the ecumenical mind to understand and preserve right relationships. This point assumes added importance when we recall that the Association has to deal more with Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic countries than does any other organization.

In a word our Foreign Work is summoned to serve a new world. To do this we simply must have men with growing minds, with modern minds, with forward-looking minds, with penetrating minds and with courageous minds. Let us pray that a double portion of God's Spirit, therefore, may rest on the Foreign Work, the foreign workers and the native workers.

Turning to the National War Work Council, I only need to remind you that the Council was officially dissolved on March 8th last. I had sent to every Secretary and President and to all of the general agencies, the circular announcing the dissolution and also the plan that the War Work Council set up before they dissolved. They created the Trustees of the War Fund of the Young Men's Christian Associations. I should indicate that a vacancy was created by the resignation of Mr. Rhoads, but it has been filled by the election of Mr. W. H. Crosby of Buffalo. This Board needs our full support and our prayers. They have a larger trust to administer than at first seemed probable. It was announced that the fund committed to their custody would amount to $7,461,-009. It is going to be approximately nine million and a half. A Liquidation Committee was also appointed by the Council to supervise the expenditure of appropriations already made for current work.

Before I sailed to Europe six weeks ago I arranged to have sent out to the Brotherhood the final financial statement of the War Work Council, giving the official audit of Price, Waterhouse & Co. We have sent out over ten thousand copies. If it has not reached you, let us know. With the prefatory reports and detailed statement, you will find it a valuable educational document. These funds have been accomplishing untold good dur-

ing the recent past. We have been helping educationally 80,000 ex-service men. This has been done in such a markedly helpful way that doors of friendship and favor have been opened in all communities and in every corner of the land.

The Inter-Racial Work has been and is one of the most statesmanlike and Christlike constructive pieces of work to which men of two races have ever set their hands. It would not have been possible had it not been for the wisely directed funds of the Council.

The Americanization work and the re-employment work carried on by the whole chain of local Associations and the general agencies, at a time of hardship and strain, has led hundreds of thousands of men to call the Association blessed. The work for our Army on the Rhine I wish every man here could inspect. I agree with two of the best American laymen who said it is the finest model of Association work they had ever seen. It is without doubt our most finished piece of work. Appreciative reference should also be made to the work among the scattered units of the Navy in the Mediterranean and the most encouraging beginnings in the American Merchant Marine. This reminds me of the regular work for our Army and Navy. You will recall the action of the late Administration in saying good-bye to the welfare societies within stations and camps. We had fought the battle to the last ditch. Nobody has ever blamed us for not fighting it as well as humans could fight. I speak of the laymen and secretaries who carried the struggle right up to the office of the Secretary of War. I am inclined to think, however, that we have lived long enough to see it was not without its advantages that we were bowed out. The regular Army and Navy work of the American Associations today was never larger, never more fruitful, and never had the favor of officers as well as men more than it has today. There is an advantage of getting at these men in their hours of leisure, away from posts, camps and stations. I am not unmindful of the other side and shall not be surprised any day to see the old service resumed in many places just as we are now permitted to carry it on in stations and posts where we have had our own permanent buildings.

In the Canal Zone, in the Hawaiian Islands, in the Philippines and on the coast of China, this regular work of our Army and Navy Associations is a work beyond praise and is financed generously and wisely by the funds for which you worked so hard.

I ought to allude to the United War Work Campaign. That campaign in which we went out for $170,500,000 for all the seven welfare socities, and of which our share was to be $100,000,000 has yielded in cash over $190,000,000. Our share of the $190,000,000 is $108,500,000, or more than we expected to receive. The cost of the campaign, you will be interested to know, was 2:19 per cent. —a little over two per cent for local, state, and national expenses. This I think you will agree was a very good record. I understand it constitutes the best showing made in any of the great war campaigns, governmental or otherwise. The Association may well take pride in this fact as it furnished so largely the ground work and leadership of the campaign.

Now coming to the work among allied armies and prisoners of war from which I have just returned, I think it will amaze some of you when I remind you that we still have a work over there serving nearly, if not quite, 3,000,000 men, or three times as many as in our total membership here at home. We have a settled policy to close up that work as soon as possible, to domesticate it where we can, to leave a living deposit that will vitalize through all of the coming days the nations concerned, to place this work as soon as may be where it belongs—in some cases in the hands of our own Foreign Department, and in other cases under the remote or immediate supervision of National Committees in Europe and of the World's Committee.

You will be interested in this classification of the nations with reference to order of demobilization or transfer of our war and post-war work. This year we have closed up our work or handed it over to the Foreign Department in Portugal, Egypt, among the Chinese in France and Asia, among the Indians everywhere, and among armies in Latin America.

The second group is France and Italy. We have made our final appropriation to those two great pieces of work, of which we are justly so proud.

The third group presents more difficulties as to demobilizing. It embraces the old Turkish areas, the Russian young men everywhere, Roumania, the New Greece—found in large part on the mainland of Asia—and Poland. Poland includes largely the old Russian Poland. According to the report of the Special Commission, led by Mr. Murray and Dr. Studer of Detroit, the work in Roumania and Greece, should some day and as soon as possible, go to the Foreign Department. The Turkish areas and Russian areas, (including Russian Poland), were already in the hands of the Foreign Department before the war, and that should be their ultimate destination and we hope the world will soon be stabilized so that it may be their early destination.

There will be brought out more fully in connection with the report of the Foreign Work Commission the significance of this overseas work. Believe me when I say that there is no part of our great trust of which we should be more proud tonight and which we should follow with more thought and prayer than this work—a by-product, you may say, in which we have been permitted to do for nearly all Europe what we were led out in other days by His beckoning hand to do for Asia, Latin America and parts of Africa.

We will not desert them in the trying hour. Time will show that it has been in some respects the most highly-multiplying service ever rendered by the North American Associations.

My last word will be with reference to the Plenary Meeting of the World's Committee of the Y. M. C. A. from which I have just returned. Under the leadership of Dr. Karl Fries this Committee has entered upon a new era. It was highly reassuring to sit for days in council at Utrecht with the recognized leaders of this Brotherhood from twenty-five different nations of Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the island nations, Australia and New Zealand.

As we sat in council there seemed to fade from memory the bloody, tear-stained, tragic years that had intervened. I could hardly believe it true as I found myself there with men from so many lands helping to resume international thinking, international planning, international action and international fellowship. It reminded me of the words of our Saviour: "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." His gaze pierced the centuries and He saw streaming up to His cross and His living person, the people of every nation, tribe and kindred. One was also vividly and blessedly reminded during those days in Holland, as here tonight, that our real unity is discovered and realized best and only in and through Jesus Christ.

Thus we complete this all too inadequate review bringing to memory God's great goodness to the North American Associations through another fateful year. Its true greatness will be determined by regarding it as a preparation for something far greater and better.

For "Lo! There breaks a yet more glorious day
The saints triumphant rise in bright array;
The King of Glory passes on His way.
Alleluia."